



# St. Labre Indian School

Educational Association  
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March 1, 2018

Commissioner Robert Taub, Chairman  
Commissioner Tony Hammond, Vice Chairman  
Commissioner Nanci Langley  
Commissioner Mark Acton  
Postal Regulatory Commission  
901 New York Avenue, NW Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20268

## **RE: Docket RM 2017-3**

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of St. Labre Indian School, a 501(c)(3) organization in Ashland, Montana, and the nearly 750 Indian children and community members on the reservations that we serve, we urge the Commission to reconsider the proposed rate increases for nonprofit organizations. St. Labre Indian School relies heavily on our direct mail fundraising program and the United States Postal Service to delivery our mail pieces to communicate with our donors and supporters across the country.

St. Labre Indian School provides an exceptional education to Native American students living in impoverished communities on the Northern Cheyenne and Crow Indian reservations on three southeastern Montana campuses: St. Labre Indian School in Ashland (grades pre-kindergarten through 12), St. Charles Mission School in Pryor (grades pre-kindergarten through 8), and Pretty Eagle Catholic Academy in St. Xavier (grades pre-kindergarten through 8). St. Labre's high school is fully accredited by the Montana State Office of Public Instruction, the Western Catholic Education Association, and by AdvancED (formerly the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools).

In addition to St. Labre's regular program of elementary and secondary education, we also offer scholarships to our graduates that go onto colleges, universities or vocational training of their choice. The St. Labre educational experience places great importance on Native American culture, language and tradition that cannot be met by traditional public school environments.

St. Labre also provides more than 1,000 nutritious meals per day during the school year in addition to summer feeding and weekend backpack food programs for students who may not be receiving enough to eat at home.

To sustain St. Labre's annual funding needs, we mail more than 28 million pieces of mail each year through the United States Postal Service to our donors. Postage represents a significant expense each year in our annual budget. Being able to accurately predict and plan for postal rate changes is critical to our finances. For St. Labre, direct mail it is the primary method we use to communicate with our supporters and raise the funds needed to carry out our mission. We have grave concerns about the negative impact the proposed rate increases – substantially above the rate of inflation – will have on our ability to accomplish our mission. If adopted as proposed, these rate increases will force our organization to reduce mail volumes which will inevitably result in reduced revenue, and in turn, will force us to make dramatic cuts in our services and programs to the children and communities we serve - which are already an underserved population.

We believe the current rate setting system where postal rates are tied to the Consumer Price Index should be maintained. It has succeeded in generating the funds necessary for the Postal Service to meet its ongoing operational needs, while also providing those that rely on the Postal Service with a stable and predictable rate structure. This is critical to our organization's ability to continue to use and rely on the mail.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and we appreciate your review and consideration on behalf of our organization.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Rachel Earl". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Rachel Earl  
Chief Development Officer  
St. Labre Indian School Educational Association

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